

Yorktown Branch

Association for the Preservation of Virginia Antiquities

The First Sixty-five Years

1921 - 1986

THESE PAGES ARE DEDICATED TO EACH OF OUR MEMBERS
NATIVE AND ADOPTED VIRGINIANS
WHOSE UNSUNG EFFORTS HAVE CARRIED ON THE GOALS OF
THE YORKTOWN BRANCH
ASSOCIATION FOR THE PRESERVATION OF VIRGINIA ANTIQUITIES

AND TO

ANNIE LAURIE CRAWFORD
NURSE, AUTHOR, HISTORIAN, HORTICULTURIST, CHEF, LEADER IN
CHURCH AND COMMUNITY AND FRIEND,
WHOSE HARD WORK, DEDICATION AND PERSISTENCE HAVE MADE
THIS VOLUME A REALITY.

Association for the Preservation
of
Virginia Antiquities
James-Town.
May 13.
MDCVII
Richmond
Chartered
February 13. 1889
God : Save : ye : Common Wealth!
Yorktown Branch

GREETING
Right Pleased are wee to make you this
Day a * Member * of our
Association & with all Goode Will
Declare ye same

In Wytnes whereof wee doe set hereto our
Hands & the Seal of our Association in the City of Richmond
in ye Yeare of Our LORD 1920

Reproduced in the style of the original
certificate issued to Life Members.

PREFACE

A report to the state organization detailing the accomplishments of the first year closed with the following statement: "The events that occurred at Yorktown are the most important to the history of this Nation, and it is with the deepest feeling of reverence and full estimation of the important work we have embraced, that we send this report to you, as one of your youngest branches." Although no longer the youngest Branch, these ideals and goals are as appropriate today as they were sixty-five years ago.

This review of the organization and goals set by the founding members of the Yorktown Branch Association for the Preservation of Virginia Antiquities and pursued with dedication and diligence during the past sixty-five years is designed to remind current members of the part they continue to play in the restoration and preservation of Yorktown's historic past and challenge them to continue this important work into the twenty-first century.

Our Committee, members of the Branch, have reviewed the minutes on deposit in the Swem Library, College of William and Mary, and the records of the first Directress, Mrs. Conway Sheild, in the Archives of the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation.

We have also solicited and elicited bits and pieces of information from members. This has served to clarify and enrich this brief story. For all the support, help and encouragement of the membership, we are deeply grateful.

Annie Laurie Crawford, Chairman and Editor

Mary Jane Cofer

Margaret Cook

Judith C. Johnson

DIRECTORS

1921 - 1946	Catherine S. Sheild (Mrs. Conway H.)
1947 - 1952	Lucy H. O'Hara (Mrs. Leslie R.)
1952 - 1966	Catherine S. Ballentine (Mrs. John J.)
1966 - 1970	Blanche Pitz (Mrs. Otto G.)
1970 - 1972	Charles A. Williamson
1972 - 1974	Isabel T. Hall (Mrs. Lewis H., Jr.)
1974 - 1976	Margaret C. Penzold (Mrs. August F.)
1976 - 1978	Ann I. Elksnin (Mrs. Henry)
1978 - 1980	Theresa B. Gammage (Mrs. Charles E.)
1980 - 1982	Doris H. Donely (Mrs. Philip)
1982 - 1984	Margaret C. Penzold (Mrs. August F.)
1984 -	S. Franklin Edwards

THE YORKTOWN BRANCH

ASSOCIATION FOR THE PRESERVATION OF VIRGINIA ANTIQUITIES

THE FIRST SIXTY-FIVE YEARS

1921 - 1986

ORGANIZATION

The Yorktown Branch of the Association for the Preservation of Virginia Antiquities (APVA) was organized February 18, 1921, during an evening meeting at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Conway H. Sheild. Their home, the oldest home in Yorktown continuously occupied by Yorktown residents, was built by Thomas Sessions prior to 1699. Mrs. Sheild had been designated by the Virginia APVA to organize the Branch. Nineteen persons attended the meeting, forming the charter membership of the Branch.

Members of the Board included native Yorktown folk, newcomers to the Yorktown area and officers assigned for duty at military installations in the Yorktown area. All shared a deep feeling of respect and enthusiastic commitment to preservation of Yorktown's special place in the history of our nation.

OFFICERS

Directress: Mrs. Conway H. Sheild (1921-1946)

1st Assistant Director: LTDCDR Gerald Bradford, U.S. Navy

2nd Assistant Director: Capt. Peter Conachy, U.S. Marines

Secretary: Mrs. George Chenoweth (1921-1951)

Treasurer: Mrs. A. J. Renforth

Three standing committees were appointed.

Ways and Means: Rev. A. J. Renforth, Chairman

Membership: Mrs. Sheild and Members of the Board

Landmark: Mrs. George P. Blow, Chairman

Other members: Mr. Conway H. Sheild

Mr. George P. Blow

Mrs. Gerald Bradford

Mr. George D. Chenoweth

Miss Elizabeth Cook

Mr. Charles F. Gillette

Miss Lillie Hudgins

Mr. B. K. Johnson
Mrs. B. K. Johnson
Miss Catherine Sheild
Mr. George Smith
Mrs. George Smith

Special committees were appointed as programs developed and activities were planned.



MRS. CONWAY H. SHEILD
Directress 1921-1946

EARLY PROJECTS

The members agreed that the programs and activities would be concerned with identification, restoration, and preservation of historic sites and records in the Yorktown area.

There was unanimous agreement that the first activity undertaken should be the

marking of historic sites. The "first work for the present will be the obtaining of data concerning the exact spot of surrender of Cornwallis, the appropriate marking of the spot, and continuing commitment to the care of the same." An "exact spot" committee was appointed.

The Committee requested assistance from Lyon G. Tyler, ex-president of the College of William and Mary, the Library of Congress, the state office of the APVA, Senators Carter Glass and Claude Swanson, and Representative S. Otis Bland in their effort to locate the surrender spot. Secretary of War John W. Weeks obtained photostated copies of eleven old maps for the Branch and Congressman Bland provided a considerable amount of pertinent data. Both were sent resolutions of appreciation by the Branch, with Congressman Bland being made an honorary member.

The Ways and Means Committee began planning fund-raising events to support preservation and conservation efforts during the Branch's second meeting. Boxes were placed near the Victory Monument and other conspicuous places to solicit voluntary public contributions to mark the surrender spot.

Although unable to get a national committee established to investigate and report on the exact spot, Branch efforts continued.

At the September meeting, the "Exact Spot" Committee brought in a sworn and notarized affidavit made on July 15, 1921, by Robert G. Griffin of Yorktown who was born in Yorktown May 8, 1847. He stated:

"I was present in the year 1859 when a monument was unveiled on the spot where the surrender of Lord Cornwallis to General Washington took place; that I remember distinctly the spot where this monument was located; that I on this day in company of Conway H. Sheild of the said town of York, went to the said spot where the said monument was located and he and I drove a piece of Galvanized Iron Pipe on the exact spot of the site of the said monument."

The marker noted by Mr. Griffin, a thirteen-foot marble and granite shaft, was placed in 1859 by the regimental company of officers of the 21st Regiment of Virginia Militia of Gloucester. This spot had been identified by marks made by William Nelson, son of Governor Nelson. This monument remained in place only briefly. It was thought to have been removed by soldiers of McClellan's Army who were stationed nearby during the siege of Yorktown in 1862.

The second marker, a pointed shaft about ten feet high, rising from a stepped base, was erected by Mr. Shaw, a superintendent of the National Cemetery, in the 1890's at his own expense. He placed it near the corner of the National Cemetery on a site supposedly marked at the time by the stumps of the four poplar trees planted by William Nelson.

In October, the Branch directed that Mr. George L. Chenoweth, a civil engineer, be employed to locate and identify the "exact spot" of surrender utilizing the data available. Appropriate marking would be sought with the aid of the War

Department.

Early in 1922, the Branch voted to leave the matter of locating the "Exact Spot of the surrender" and the "placing of signs at historic sites" for the future and to concentrate all its efforts on the preservation of records in the Yorktown Clerk's office.



EXACT SPOT MONUMENT
Erected by Mr. Shaw in the 1890's

The final information in the Branch records concerning location of the "exact spot" is in a letter in APVA filed (1972) from Admiral David Polatty, who wrote of his tour of duty in Yorktown in 1924:

"Incidentally, there was a marker, lost in the weeds and bushes near the corner of the National Cemetery. I located the marker and had it repaired and painted. It was reputed to be the site of the surrender. I now understand it was erroneously placed."

The Articles of Surrender were prepared by British, French and American citizens at the Moore House. Information from Mr. James Haskett, Senior Historian at the National Park, states that the Articles of Capitulation were signed by General Cornwallis in redoubt 10. The Surrender of Arms occurred in a field along Old Yorktown Road.

An Entertainment committee was appointed during the third meeting and a resolution passed that the Sheild residence and lawn be used for all entertainments. The first social event, "the Lawn Fete," was held on May 26, 1921. This was described as "one of the most elegant and brilliant affairs given in Yorktown since the Surrender of Cornwallis." Over 134 dollars were raised.



THE SESSIONS HOUSE
The home of Mr. and Mrs. Conway H. Sheild

During the July meeting (1921), members had agreed that all historic spots in Yorktown, as well as York County, should be catalogued to assure that only authentic spots were recognized. This would permit the preparation of lists for the guidance of visitors and the public. A special committee was appointed to prepare the list of notable historic spots. The Committee recommended that signs be placed at the spots and that a folder be prepared to aid travelers desiring information. A special tourist folder with a map and list of historic sites was published. It was sold to the public and remained in print for over a decade. The folder, "for the information of the traveling public, was highly commented upon as the best and most concise piece of information given out, meeting a long needed demand." See pages 23 through 26.

Mrs. Leslie O'Hara, a charter member, recalled that the young daughter of one of the members enjoyed selling the map and guide to tourists walking on Main street past the Sheild home. It was also sold in local stores at five cents per copy.

A letter had been sent to Senators Glass and Swanson, and to Congressman Bland, in 1921, requesting their cooperation in making October 19 a national holiday. Congressman Bland "sympathized with their interest" but wrote that Congressional interest was involved in making November 11 a holiday, and that there was no possibility that two holidays would be established so close together. (In 1986 efforts are still being made to have October 19 made a state and/or national holiday).

During the second year concern was expressed about the condition of the Court House and surrounding gardens. Members requested that the interior be cleaned and grass and shrubbery be planted on the grounds. When nothing had been done within two months, a letter of protest was sent to Judge Tyler "in an effort to arouse the citizens."

MEMBERSHIP

At the April meeting the secretary reported, "We are now in existence three months and have about sixty members. Just ten members was the prediction of the wise ones when we started..." At the end of the first year the Branch reported a membership of 76: 63 annual, 10 life and 3 honorary. Honorary membership was conferred on individuals who had contributed to or were closely allied to a person who had performed some special service to the Branch. The register of early members included names of persons from District of Columbia, Ohio, Maryland, Iowa, Missouri, Massachusetts, New Jersey, North Carolina, and Pennsylvania. These members were, in a report from the Branch, "Showing that the birthplace of a people is always dear to the heart of that people." The number of members has varied through the years. The Sesquicentennial celebration of the Victory at Yorktown brought many celebrants, which probably influenced the increase to 91 in 1931: 54 annual, 30 life and 7 honorary. "The Directress had a reputation for a special talent in recruiting members." In 1946 the membership was only 21. Member interests and activities were focused on the war effort, knitting, rolling bandages, and entertaining military personnel stationed in the area. In 1986 there are 133 enthusiastic and active members.

MEMORIAL TREES

Members expressed interest in planting memorial trees in and around Yorktown. A committee was appointed whose members assumed responsibility for raising funds and selecting sites. Procedures and selection of trees and management of funds were established.

The Memorial Tree Committee planted four elm trees in front of the monument. The trees were reported in place at the February 1927 meeting,

having been set by Mr. Childrey "who gave his service and furnished the truck." A fence was placed in front of the trees to protect them from traffic, and a dedication ceremony was held.

A tree was planted at the Nelson House as a memorial to Mrs. Katherine Blow, who spearheaded the opening of homes during Garden Week to benefit Branch activities.

Three trees were planted at the Court House in Yorktown in memory of Circuit Court Judge Conway H. Sheilds, Jr., County Court Judge Nelson Smith, and Commonwealth Attorney Paul Crockett. A dogwood tree was planted at Secretary Nelson's homesite in memory of Charles Williamson who had served as director.

In 1982, the balance in the Memorial Tree Fund was presented as a gift from the Branch to the Yorktown Arts Foundation to cover the cost of landscaping the garden of the Foundation headquarters, On The Hill.

SECRETARY THOMAS NELSON'S HOMESITE

On a visit to Yorktown, in November 1921, William Mayo Atkinson of Gonzales, Texas, a descendent of Secretary Nelson, gave a dollar to the Branch to start a fund to mark the site of Secretary Nelson's home, which was destroyed during the Battle of Yorktown. Members had agreed that the site of the home should be uncovered and a marker placed there. Mr. John F. Brown, owner of the site, uncovered the site and placed a marker at his own expense. Mr. Brown was sent "a resolution of appreciation for his service to history and the public." The marker apparently remained in place until 1928.



APVA PLAQUE MARKING THE SITE OF SECRETARY NELSON'S HOMESITE

In 1928 the Branch learned that the Highway Department planned to place a road "from the eastern limits of Yorktown down the Hampton Road." This road, as planned, would pass over the foundation of Secretary Nelson's homesite. The Branch protested, agreeing that members wanted the road, but asked the Highway Department to move the planned road a few feet to the side of the foundation. The Highway Commissioner suggested that the Branch seek possession of the site and agreed that the road could be "split and run around the site." He also suggested that shrubbery could be planted around the site, making it more prominent if the Monument Hotel would give the Highway Department the right to do so. The site was donated through the Branch to the Virginia APVA by Judge Ferris, trustee of the General Association, and the Peninsula Land Company. The work of making the site outline and protecting it from souvenir collectors was carried out by the Landmark Committee. The bronze plaque was placed in July, 1930.

RESTORATION OF COURT RECORDS

During the first year the Branch initiated a program to preserve York County Court records (which date back to 1633). Appeals for funding support were made to the Library of Congress and the New York Historical Association with no success. When state aid was sought, the state office suggested that the records be sent to the Virginia State Library. The Branch would not agree; with Mr. Sheild remarking that, "As long as I am alive the records will remain in York County." When another effort was made in 1928 to have the old records sent to the State Library, the Branch again protested.

The Directress wrote to other patriotic societies to request funds for the record restoration, noting that, "A silent appeal seems to emanate from these centuries old volumes, begging to be saved from the ravages of time and our association hears the call and will try to make their preservation our next work."

The need for restoration of the old records was publicized at the 1922 State Conference of the Virginia Society of the Daughters of the American Revolution held in Yorktown. Due to this effort, the Daughters of 1812 financed a volume, as did the Virginia Society of American Colonists, and the Colonial Dames in the State of Virginia. Later the York County Board of Supervisors underwrote a volume and John D. Rockefeller restored a record in appreciation for the assistance given him by the Branch during the restoration of Colonial Williamsburg. Individuals as well as patriotic groups continue to restore and preserve these records.

Through the years preservation of county court records has been a priority of Branch activity. In reality the preservation of York County Court records began in 1861. Bolivar Sheild, County Court Clerk, noting the approach of McClellan's army, removed all court records, loaded them on a wagon to take them to Richmond for safe keeping. On the way he learned that he would

encounter Federal Troops, so he turned the wagon toward the river, put the records on a sloop, sailed up the York River to the Mattaponi and placed them in an ice house near the river. At the end of the war the records were returned to Yorktown. The Branch honored him with a plaque in the County Clerk's Office.

In the 1950's Mrs. Sarah Armistead and Mrs. Lula Renforth were appointed to examine the old books and records stored in the Court House to determine how many and in what order remaining volumes should be restored. A priority list developed from their report.

They reported that Orders and Wills, 1709-16, had been restored at a cost of \$240.00. The Richmond APVA had restored Books, Deeds 1741-54, Vol., V, as a contribution to the Yorktown Branch, at a cost of \$315.00; that Mrs. Martin and Mrs. Katherine Blow were planning an auction bridge party as a benefit; and that a book was to be "rejuvenated and dedicated in Mrs. Sheild's honor" by the year's end. The treasurer reported that funds were dangerously low, with only \$240.00 on hand and a Savings Bond coming due in January. Another card party was planned and Mrs. Sheild's book was restored and presented to the clerk's office as scheduled.



JEANIE COOK, ANN SHADE, LUCY O'HARA EXAMINE BOOKS RESTORED IN THEIR HONOR OR IN MEMORY OF THEIR LOVED ONES. S. FRANKLIN EDWARDS, STANDING, PRESENTS A RESTORED BOOK TO EDITH ELLIOT AS MARGARET PENZOLD LOOKS ON.

THE COLONIAL NATIONAL PARK

The Branch moved to cooperate with the National Society Daughters of the American Revolution "in their efforts to secure Moore House and the fortifications" for preservation. Congressman Bland had sent the Branch a copy of the bill he had introduced in the House of Representatives seeking reaction of the

Branch. In a special meeting, Branch members passed a resolution of endorsement accompanied by the following note:

The Yorktown Branch of APVA is "heartily in favor of the United States taking over and preserving the fortification in and around Yorktown, connected with the siege of Yorktown in the war for American Independence, and certain old buildings, such as the Moore House, and the First Customs House in the United States, 'but it is opposed to the taking over of Yorktown and adjacent vicinity, as a whole, and dispossessing the inhabitants thereof, of their homes and businesses. Members believe the object of this bill can be fully carried out without having to do this, and requests the Committee to whom this bill has been referred to amend the same to conform to this resolution."

Copies of the resolution were ordered sent to Congressman Bland and to Virginia's Senators Glass and Swanson. Although the bill introduced by Congressman Bland did not pass, interest and efforts in preserving Yorktown as an historic park continued. Congressman Cramton of Minnesota introduced a bill which was approved in July 1930. The Colonial National Park was established by Presidential Proclamation in December 1930. The area included the Yorktown Battlefield, Jamestown, parts of the city of Williamsburg and roads connecting these areas. The original area covered 2,500 acres. In January 1931 the Park was extended to an area not to exceed 4,500 acres.

The scope and variety of Branch interests in preservation and restoration have been refreshingly inclusive.

Concern for the preservation of plants brought to Yorktown during the colonial period was expressed by a number of members. Scotch Broom, a hardy shrub, decorates the roadside in and around Yorktown. Aware that visitors and others were collecting these plants, a request was made that the collection of these plants be prohibited. The Daily Press was sent a copy of the request. The commander of the Navy Mine Depot donated three signs to prevent further destruction.

When the Dixie Poster Advertising Company placed a billboard near the Custom House and when the Branch protest was ignored, the Branch approached the owner of the property who agreed to discontinue the placement and to try to cancel the contract before its expiration.

A letter from Gannett Publisher thanked the Directress for sending a clipping about Pocahontas (Newspaper article "Half Forgotten Romances of Early American History. Story of Pocahontas"). He also requested facts and pictures of Pocahontas and Captain John Smith.

GRAVE SITES AND CEMETERIES

During the third meeting of the Branch members agreed that preservation and

restoration of many graves and cemeteries was urgently needed. The oldest tomb in York County (the third oldest in Virginia) was that of Major Gooch. Mr. Sheild and Mr. Chenoweth were appointed "to investigate the condition of the tomb, approaches to it, and suggestions for a road and a fence to enclose it." Dr. Tyler was contacted for information. He reported that the burial was in the chancel of Old York Church near the mouth of Wormley Creek. The site of Old York Church was on the grounds of the Navy Fuel Oil Station (now U.S. Coast Guard Training Center). In the will of Governor Gooch's widow (1773) there was a reference to a former family burial plot: "And first I would bequest wherewith to repair and keep up the burying place at York in Virginia where my dear son and grandson and brother lie, but have met with such ill use in relation to it already as convinces me it will never be put to right use therefore I omit it, but as a small token of my remembrance of [my son's] education I give to William and Mary College in Virginia my gilt sacramental cup and put in a red leather case and a large Folio: Bible of Fields bound in four Volumes."

Lt. David Polatty, the officer in charge who reported for duty in July 1924, "found the stone covering the grave in a sad state of decay, particularly from vandalism. Souvenir hunters had broken off considerable portions of the stone."

Lt. Polatty wrote: "I had the station force construct a shelter over the stone to protect it from the elements. But of a great deal more importance, I had a barrier of iron pipe mounted in concrete around the perimeter of the grave constructed. This pipe barrier was so constructed to prevent, or at least make it difficult for souvenir hunters to further destroy the grave stone."

At the September meeting it was reported that the Boy Scouts in a work project during their camping season had improved the road leading to the tomb and grounds around it. The branch sent a resolution of gratitude to Thomas Sparrow, a Scout executive from Norfolk who had supervised the work.

The tombs of "John Henry" (1761-1807), Abraham Archer, Mary Sansum and Mrs. Mary Gibbons resting in Grace Churchyard were reported decaying. Members of the Branch restored them.



MRS. JEANIE COOK AND MRS. THERESA GAMMAGE EXAMINE THE GOOCH GRAVESITE

Commander E. F. Glover of the Naval Mine Depot called attention of the Branch to the critical need for repairs to the Digges tombs at Bellfield. The Navy assumed responsibility for the restoration. The annual report of the Branch confirmed that: "Commander Alfred H. Miles had repaired and placed in an excellent condition the four Digges tombs without cost to us, and for this splendid and meritorious work the Branch made Commander Miles an honorary member."

In October 1924 the Branch received a request to repair the tomb of Mildred Jameson in the cemetery near the Moore House. A tree had fallen and broken the slab. The tree and roots were removed and the slab left on the ground as a measure of preservation. The descendant of Mrs. Jameson who made the request paid for the work.

Members expressed concern about fading inscriptions on old tombstones in Grace Churchyard. These were copied for preservation. It was then decided that the Branch would obtain "a suitable book" and record inscriptions, location and condition of tombstones in the area—and that the book would be kept by the Directress. (The records from several area burial spots are in Branch papers.)

In 1926 two tombstones were discovered during excavation opening Buckner Street in Yorktown. These were the tombs of Colonel George Read and his wife *Elizabeth, the daughter of Nicholas Martiau, the first settler on the site of Yorktown. Following consultation with the Vestry of Grace Church, Dr. Minson Cook paid the cost of placing the tombs in the churchyard near the Nelson graves. (The Nelson family are lineal descendents of Nicholas Martiau.)

The American Legion and Foreign Legion both requested the location of the graves of French sailors and soldiers killed in the Siege of Yorktown. Miss Lulie Jones reported that the graves had been pointed out to her by her father when she was a child. The grave site was marked by the Comte de Grasse and Hampton Chapters National Society DAR. The American Legion also requested the location of Redoubt 9.

A search for the names of Confederate soldiers buried in the area was made in 1932. Information was obtained of the muster rolls of the Nelson Guards, York County's Confederate Company "F". This information was obtained from the Library in Richmond and in old letters and records in the County Court House and in the archives of the Branch. In 1934 granite markers were placed on the graves in the National Cemetery.

The Cemetery and Church site of Charles Parish, one of the three original parishes into which York County was divided, was originally known as New Poquoson. The register of the church was closed in 1800 leaving the site of the cemetery neglected. In the 1930's the Branch assumed responsibility for clearing the site, seeking assistance first from the county, then the state and federal agencies requesting labor to assist a supervisor who would be paid by the Branch, from WPA or other public services financed by the Federal Government. Since help from these sources was not forthcoming and the Bishop of Norfolk did not wish to assume a gift of ownership of the two acres involved, the branch was

helpful in having the land deeded to York County in 1935. The title was conveyed by J. H. Taylor, owner, in February. A marker was placed by the Branch in 1940.

Members restored some old tombs in the Grafton Christian Church Cemetery. The church sent the following note: "We feel deeply grateful to Mrs. L. R. O'Hara and the Yorktown Branch APVA for the fine job of restoration done on some of the oldest tombs in our cemetery."

Mrs. Allen R. Sinclair sent a request to the Branch to place a permanent marker at the grave of Ashton Sinclair, past president of the Old Dominion Dragoons, near the National Cemetery in Yorktown.

On September 24, 1962 the Branch sent a letter to the state organization requesting assistance in restoring the tomb of the Hon. William Nelson. The APVA sent a check in the amount of \$400. The total cost was more than \$600.

In 1984, Edith Elliot, Clerk of Courts, requested an inventory of the cemeteries in York County. Mr. John Burcher reported that the project would be extensive if the Branch undertook to locate all the cemeteries in York County. This project is still on the Branch agenda but not in active operation.

ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION

The Branch supported planning for the Sesquicentennial celebration to be held in 1931 and endorsed it through resolutions and letters. Members "heartily endorsed the plans of the Sesquicentennial celebration movement committee" and went on record in support of the resolutions of Congressman S. Otis Bland and the Newport News Kiwanis. The Branch resolution was given good general publicity. Funding for this celebration was contributed largely by individual donations through the Sesquicentennial Commission. William Ashe of Gloucester Point represented the Branch on the planning committee. Mrs. Emma O. Chenoweth, Secretary, served on the State Commission. Rev. A. J. Renforth, Chairman of the Ways and Means Committee, served as a member of the Yorktown Sesquicentennial Association, and on the State Commission.

The Rev. W. A. R. Goodwin, rector of Bruton Parish Church, and President of the Yorktown Sesquicentennial Association wrote for the program Yorktown—A Symbol: "The memories and aspirations the celebrants recall will be enriched and fulfilled by time... Then, but not till then, will all that Yorktown symbolizes be seen and understood in the deeper and more abundant life of the world. The celebrations of the future will speak of these things which will then be seen by a clearer vision."

In the spring of 1941 the Branch took the lead in planning observances of "the 300th Anniversary of the founding of York Shire, one of the Eight Shires (Counties) of the Colony of Virginia. An anniversary committee meeting was held at the Courthouse to inspect the condition and make plans for improving the appearance. The observance was held on June 4. Judge Frank Armistead of the

14th Judicial District and Superintendent B. Floyd Flickinger of Colonial National Historic Park were speakers for the ceremony.

Planning for the commemoration of the landing of the first permanent settlers in Jamestown in 1607 began in 1951. This celebration, to mark the 350th anniversary in 1957 was to be national and international in scope. The General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Virginia appointed a preliminary committee to prepare tentative plans for the Jamestown-Williamsburg-Yorktown celebration. Delegate Paul Crockett, of Yorktown, was chairman of the preliminary committee composed of Delegates Lewis A. McMurran, Jr., John Warren Cooke, Felix Edmunds, W. Ray Rouse, and Senators Lloyd C. Byrd and Harry F. Byrd, Jr. On the basis of their recommendations the Assembly created the Virginia 350th Anniversary Commission, consisting of 17 members representative of groups in the public and military sectors. The Assembly appropriated \$200,000 for the 1952-54 biennium for Festival planning and development in cooperation with the federal commission that was to be announced sometime in 1954.

President Dwight D. Eisenhower appointed a National Commission in 1954 to organize a "proper celebration" of the Jamestown event. The prominent part Yorktown would play in these festivities would be centered around the Victory Monument and the Battlefield. Lightning had struck the monument in 1941. The statue was badly damaged. The shaft on which it stood was badly cracked. Obviously the Yorktown Victory Monument must be replaced or restored before the Anniversary celebration.

The distinguished sculptor, Oskar J. Hansen of Charlottesville was employed to make recommendations for restoration. Then the Hon. Guy Cordon, Chairman of the Senate Appropriations Committee, Department of Interior, authorized a \$50,000 grant for the restoration.

A dispute occurred between the sculptor and the Yorktown Day Committee composed of representatives of historic and patriotic organizations. The sculptor wanted to redesign the shaft and move the monument to the battlefield. Members of the committee and the residents felt that it would not be improved by redesigning, and they wanted it to remain at its present site. The King's Daughters requested that the APVA join in protest against the sculptor's proposal to change the style and move it to the battlefield. A letter was sent to Senators Harry F. Byrd and Willis Robertson. Senator Willis Robertson recommended that the National Park Service be consulted. Senator Byrd agreed to "do all I can to expedite the decision." Three Yorktown women, leaders in historic preservation, Mrs. Leslie O'Hara, representing the APVA, Mrs. A. J. Renforth, representing the King's Daughters and Mrs. George Chenoweth, representing the Comte de Grasse Chapter DAR met with civic leaders, administrators, and Yorktown Trustees, convincing participants in the dispute that the decision should be made by a majority vote of the citizens of Yorktown.

More than 2,500 invitations were sent to members of organizations that had a part in the event. In addition to the commissions and committees of the

Yorktown Day Association, the APVA, the Alexander Hamilton Bicentennial Commission, the Army, the Navy, and the Air Force had been asked to submit names for the guest list.

Three thousand people watched the ceremony at the Victory Monument on Saturday, October 19, 1957, when the monument was formally dedicated. Invited guests included: the Marquis Rambaud de Grasse, Comte Phillipe de la Fayette, M. Jean Rochambeau and Lord Cornwallis. Lord Cornwallis was the only one to decline. In a letter he said: "I only wish that I could join your other distinguished visitors and play some small part in your celebrations. You know, without my telling you, how much I value such friendship, and I shall be thinking of you all on October 18th and 19th. I trust that the ghost of my ancestor will not haunt the proceedings as I am sure that his spirit will be cheering you all on and he will be standing beside you hand in hand with his true friend, the great George Washington."

The U.S. Navy sent the USS Currituck and the Casa Grande. They were anchored in the York River and were open for inspection on Friday, October 18. Detachments from the two ships participated in the pageant recreating the Battle of Yorktown and the surrender of Lord Cornwallis. 1957 had truly been a year of reliving Yorktown's historic past and reaffirming her special position, in the Story of America. Perhaps since the purpose of the 350th Anniversary festivities was to celebrate America, Patrick Henry had said it best "I am not a Virginian but an American."

The 50th Anniversary of the organization of the Branch was held at the Hornsby House, the home of Mr. and Mrs. Willets Bowditch April 24, 1971. The gala affair was attended by six Charter members and more than 100 other guests were in attendance.



SIX CHARTER MEMBERS WERE AMONG THOSE PARTICIPATING IN THE 50th ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION OF THE YORKTOWN BRANCH. From left, seated, Mrs. Wathall, Mrs. Wainwright, Mrs. Renforth, standing, Mrs. O'Hara, Mrs. Ballentine, Angus Murdock, Executive Director, VAPVA, and Mrs. Graham.

FUND RAISING

Members of the Ways and Means Committee were always alert to opportunities for fund raising in support of their wide-ranging and ambitious programs. On a visit to Yorktown, Mrs. Mauer gave a travel talk as a benefit performance that yielded \$26.00. During Garden Week in 1927, "York Hall" (the Nelson House) was opened to the public for the benefit of the VAPVA. The Yorktown Branch provided light refreshments for sale and earned \$49.50.

The Sheild residence was opened to benefit Grace Church and the Yorktown Branch. These events established the custom during Garden Week that was observed for a number of years.

Mr. and Mrs. John F. Brown from Philadelphia gave "a most delightful recital for the benefit of the Branch, in the Episcopal Church." The Committee reported that \$53.00 was cleared on this affair.

Benefit card parties became an annual event. A December party at Monument Lodge was sponsored by the Ways and Means Committee to support the old records fund. Tickets were fifty cents, and cards, pencils, and score pads were to be furnished by the guests. Four prizes were offered and refreshments provided.

A silent auction was held for "restoration" of funds. Bids for objects were written on pieces of paper, with the object going to the person making the highest bid—a less exciting but a quieter competition.

The Branch and the Comte de Grasse Chapter DAR conducted walking tours of historic sites and "venerable home" to fund reconstruction work on Grace Church, a contribution to maintenance of the Customhouse and restoration of the brick wall which surrounds the Colonial Herb Garden. Tours were also conducted to support Courthouse records.

A donation was made to the Comte de Grasse Chapter, DAR for use of the Customhouse garden to host the reception given by the Branch when the 95th annual meeting was held in Yorktown in April, 1984. Members attending also toured historic sites and homes in Yorktown.

Donations are made to Grace Church for use of the Parish House and parlor for regular quarterly meetings.

A benefit, opening historic homes, provided funds for fire proofing vaults in the new courthouse. A committee was appointed to plan the dedication and recommend placement of the Bolivar Sheild plaque which had been purchased in 1936.

The annual report of 1956 had characterized the year as "quiet, not accomplishing much" but an innovative idea for fund raising was planned to provide funds for a needy treasury. A ball, designated a "Phantom Ball" was one that occurred only in the minds of Branch participants who donated the amount of money that they would have spent in preparing for the ball and then "stayed home."

OTHER ACTIVITIES

Through the years the Branch has maintained a pattern of cooperation and collaboration with other patriotic, historic and community groups and individuals. Members have responded to requests for information and assistance and have been recipients of valuable gifts and important information in pursuit of their goals.

"A special little gift" was received from Robert Nelson Howard, a great, great grandson of General Thomas Nelson, Jr., a gavel made from a piece of wood from the Nelson House which was given Mr. Howard when his ancestral home was being restored by Mr. George P. Blow.

The seal of the Borough of York was in Williamsburg. The Branch sent a letter to Kenneth Chorley requesting return of the seal to Yorktown. It was returned promptly and placed in the Yorktown museum.

The Branch expressed appreciation to Mrs. Arthur Kelly Bailey Evans and made her an honorary member for "the patriotic interest and generous munificent donation" to save the old Customhouse commenting that the building is being restored for future generations.

In 1973 a plan to move the York County seat to Grafton was under consideration. Branch members passed a resolution to keep Yorktown the county seat and to retain the Circuit Court and the County Court in Yorktown. The plan was abandoned and a new building to house the courts was constructed in Yorktown.

Project funding and donations have never been kept intramurally. The Branch has been generous in support of restoration and preservation of sites throughout Virginia. Funds and gifts in support of historic and patriotic organization activities have been a policy of the Branch beginning in the early years and the policy continues.

In 1926, a gift of \$18 was sent to the Shenandoah National Park Fund. This amount purchased three acres of land for the Park.

A contribution was sent toward the bronze plaque to be placed on the "Dock Master's House, Black Wall, London," to commemorate the sailing on December 19, 1606, of the three ships that brought the first settlers to Jamestown on May 12, 1607.

In 1928, the Branch made a donation to the Yorktown Patron's League toward furnishings for the new school.

A donation was made to the Williamsburg Branch toward decorations for the Altar in Jamestown celebrating the visit of the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Queen of England.

Support was provided to aid with the restoration of Patrick Henry's home at Scotchtown and the childhood home of Dolly Madison.

Wallpaper to decorate three rooms and the stair well for restoration of the John Marshall House was provided by the Branch.

A lithograph, "The Battle of Culloden," was donated for the restoration of Bacon's Castle. An additional donation is planned for restoration of the garden.

A contribution was made to the Gloucester Historical Society to support Phase II of the Rosewell Preservation.

Two Chippendale chairs, a gift to the Branch from Frank Dickinson, were sent to VAPVA for the auction in Washington.

The Branch and the Naomi Dozier Circle of Grace Church shared the cost of refurbishing two Parson's Chairs for the Grace Church Parish House Parlor.

The Branch currently sponsors a page in the program and conducts a patriotic program on the steps of Grace Church on the 4th of July. The patriotic program is followed by a wreath-laying ceremony at the tomb of General Thomas Nelson.

A memorial gift was presented to the Customhouse to Honor Mrs. Blanche Pitz, a directress and life member of the Branch and a member of the Comte de Grasse Chapter DAR and a trustee of the Customhouse.

Dues are a source of funding, but there is a special obligation to support state objectives for APVA restorations and properties. A note of the first change in dues in twenty years came as a bulletin from Richmond in 1984.

Individual	\$20.00
Family	30.00
Contributor	100.00
Sponsor	250.00
Benefactor	500.00
Corporate	1000.00
Life	1000.00

The dues schedule contains a provision that members 65 and older and students under 25 might elect to pay \$10.00 annually.

A Branch retains 50% of individual or family membership; 25% of contributors; 20% of sponsors, 25% of benefactors; and 25% of corporate and life.

Three meetings combining business, program and reception are held annually. Board meetings usually precede the business session. Summer picnics at historic sites or homes of members in and around Yorktown have been held for a number of years. These have usually been "covered dish" with members and their families enjoying games, a tour of the site and socializing. Picnics have been held at the home of Mr. Robert E. White, the Coast Guard Station and the Victory Center. In recent years the picnic has been replaced with a catered "lawn fete" held in the

gardens of members' homes. Mrs. Paul Crockett hosted the first event and Dr. and Mrs. William Cseh the second.

Our current director, S. Franklin Edwards and members of the Board have added elegant Christmas cocktail buffets (catered by members) which are held in members' homes. Homes that have been enjoyed for this activity are Marlbank Farm, the home of Mr. and Mrs. James M. O'Hara, the Hornsby House, the home of Mr. and Mrs. Willets Bowditch, and the Dudley Digges House, the home of Superintendent of the Colonial National Historic Park Richard Maeder and Mrs. Maeder.

Bus tours during the summer have become an annual event. They are held in July and are one-day adventures. They serve as a means of visiting APVA properties and "fellowshipping" with members of other APVA Chapters. These bus tours have become a popular summer event and have included:

- 1982 — Christ Church, Irvington, Dragon Run Country Store, and Walter Reed's Birthplace.
- 1983 — Wakefield and Stratford in Westmoreland County.
- 1984 — Smith's Fort Plantation, Brandon, and Bacon's Castle in Surry County.
- 1985 — The Mary Washington House, St. James' House, Hugh Mercer Apothecary Shop, Rising Sun Tavern, and Kenmore in Fredericksburg.
- 1986 — Scotchtown, Dooley Mansion, Agecroft, Wilton, the Jefferson Hotel in Richmond.

The "Summer Fete," the Christmas cocktail buffet and the summer tours have become delightful and profitable fundraisers.

As the Yorktown Branch looks towards the twenty-first century, it must remember the ideals of its founders. Restoration and preservation of the sites and records of Yorktown and the surrounding area should remain firm on the Branch's agenda. The goals of the early founders should inspire the current members to set their sights high.

YORK COUNTY RECORDS RESTORED BY THE YORKTOWN BRANCH APVA

- 1923 - Wills and Deeds, Number 2, 1645 - 1649
Dedicated to George Preston Blow
- 1926 - Wills and Inventories, Number 21, 1760 - 1771
No dedication

- 1926 - Deeds, Orders, Wills, Number 9, 1691 - 1694
Dedicated to Bolivar Sheild
- 1933 - Marriage Bond and Consents, Part I & Part II, 1772 - 1849
Dedicated to Catherine Stryker Sheild (Mrs. Conway H. Sheild, Sr.)
- 1938 - Claims and Losses of York County Citizens in the British Invasion of 1781
Dedicated to Catherine Stryker Sheild (Mrs., Conway H. Sheild, Sr.)
- 1952 - Orders, Wills, Etc., Part I & Part II, 1716 - 1720
Dedicated to Conway Howard Sheild
- 1953 - Orders, Wills, Number 14, Part I & Part II, 1709 - 1716
No dedication
- 1954 - Deeds, Vol. V, Part I & Part II, 1741 - 1754
Dedicated to Mrs. Conway H. Sheild (Catherine Stryker Sheild)
- 1955 - Judgements and Orders, Number 3, 1759 - 1763
Dedicated to Mrs. Andrew Jackson Renforth
- 1960 - Will Book, Number 13, 1847 - 1860
Dedicated to Mrs. Catherine Sheild Ballentine
- 1968 - Wills and Inventories, Part 1 and Part 2, 1783 - 1811
Dedicated to Samuel Merrifield Remiss
- 1973 - Deed Book, Number 6, 1777 - 1791
Dedicated to Mrs. A. J. Renforth, Mrs. J. J. Wainwright, Mrs. C. C. Walthall, Mrs. L. R. O'Hara, Mrs. C. G. Fletcher
- 1974 - Orders, Wills, Number 16, Part I, 1720 - 1729
Dedicated to Leslie Richard O'Hara
- 1974 - Orders, Wills, Number 16, Part II, 1720 - 1729
Dedicated to T. T. Hudgins, Circuit Court Clerk
- 1980 - York County Judgements and Orders, 1763 - 1765
Dedicated to Charles E., Hatch, Jr.
- 1981 - Deed Book, Number 16, 1854 - 1866
To Commemorate the 1981 Bicentennial

- 1983 - Guardian Accounts, 1823 - 1846
—Dedicated to Lucy Hudgins O'Hara (Mrs. Leslie R.)
- 1983 - Land Possession Book, 1795 - 1854
Dedicated to Lula Wade Renforth
- 1984 - The Minutes Book, 1870 - 1875
Dedicated to Jeanie Lister Cook (Mrs. Rodney E.)
- 1984 - Guardian Account Book, 1736 - 1780
Dedicated to Kathleen O'Hara Ambrose and Leslie Richard O'Hara, Jr.
- 1984 - Guardian Account Book, 1780 - 1823
Dedicated to Kathleen O'Hara Ambrose and Leslie Richard O'Hara, Jr.
- 1985 - York County Order Book, 1795 - 1803
Dedicated to Emma Leake Chenoweth (Mrs. George Durbin), Letty Sheild Scott (Mrs. Wilmer D.), Isabel Thomas Hall (Mrs. Lewis H., Jr.)
- 1986 - York County Order Book, 1831 - 1844
Dedicated to Susie Slaight Sheild (Mrs. Conway H., Jr.)

INVENTORY OF APVA MAPS ON LOAN TO THE DAR EXHIBITED IN THE YORKTOWN CUSTOMHOUSE

- 19th Century Tin Map Case
- Map of Ballard's Creek, framed
- Description of part of Anderson Estate purchased by C&O Railroad Co., ca 1900, framed
- Sixty-five acre Plat including Ballard's Creek, framed
- Plat in Yorktown, beginning at Church Street, surveyed by D. W. Schenk, County Surveyor, March 8, 1890, framed
- Robert Anderson's Plat made Jan. 10, 1853 showing Randolph line, framed
- Plat of piece of land surveyed for Robert Anderson of 740 acres by D. Browne, Surveyor, framed on parchment
- Representation of survey in County of York, order of Circuit Surveyor, Yorktown, April 19, 1948, framed

Yorktown Branch
 Association for the Preservation of Virginia Antiquities
 Post Office Box 405
 Yorktown, Virginia 23690

Announcing:

THE APVA RICHMOND SUMMER TOUR

July 19, 1986

Depart: 7:30 a.m. Murphy's Mart, Gloucester
 8:00 a.m. from Grace Episcopal Church, Yorktown
 Return: Approximately 5:30 p.m. Yorktown
 Approximately 6:00 p.m. Gloucester

 SCOTCHTOWN
 DOOLEY MANSION
 JEFFERSON HOTEL
 WILTON
 AGECROFT

LUNCHEON AT THE JEFFERSON HOTEL
 CASH BAR

+Coffee and donuts on the morning trip
 +Happy Hour on the return trip. Bring your own bottle (BTOL)
 Glasses, ice and mixers will be furnished

COST: \$37.00 PER PERSON, ALL INCLUSIVE

Mail your check payable to Yorktown Branch, APVA to
 Box 405 Yorktown, VA 23690 by July 12, PLEASE.



YORKTOWN MONUMENT



Guide to Historic Yorktown

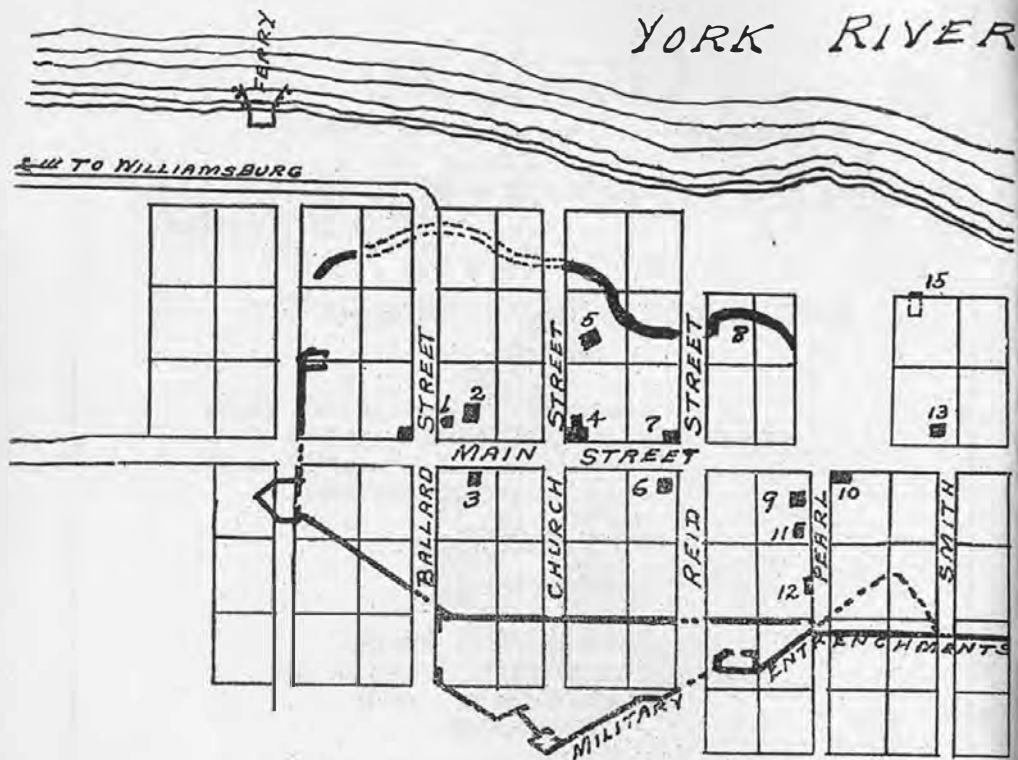


SAILED FROM "THE DOWNS"
 LONDON, ENGLAND, DECEMBER 19, 1606
 ARRIVED AT JAMESTOWN
 MAY 13, 1607

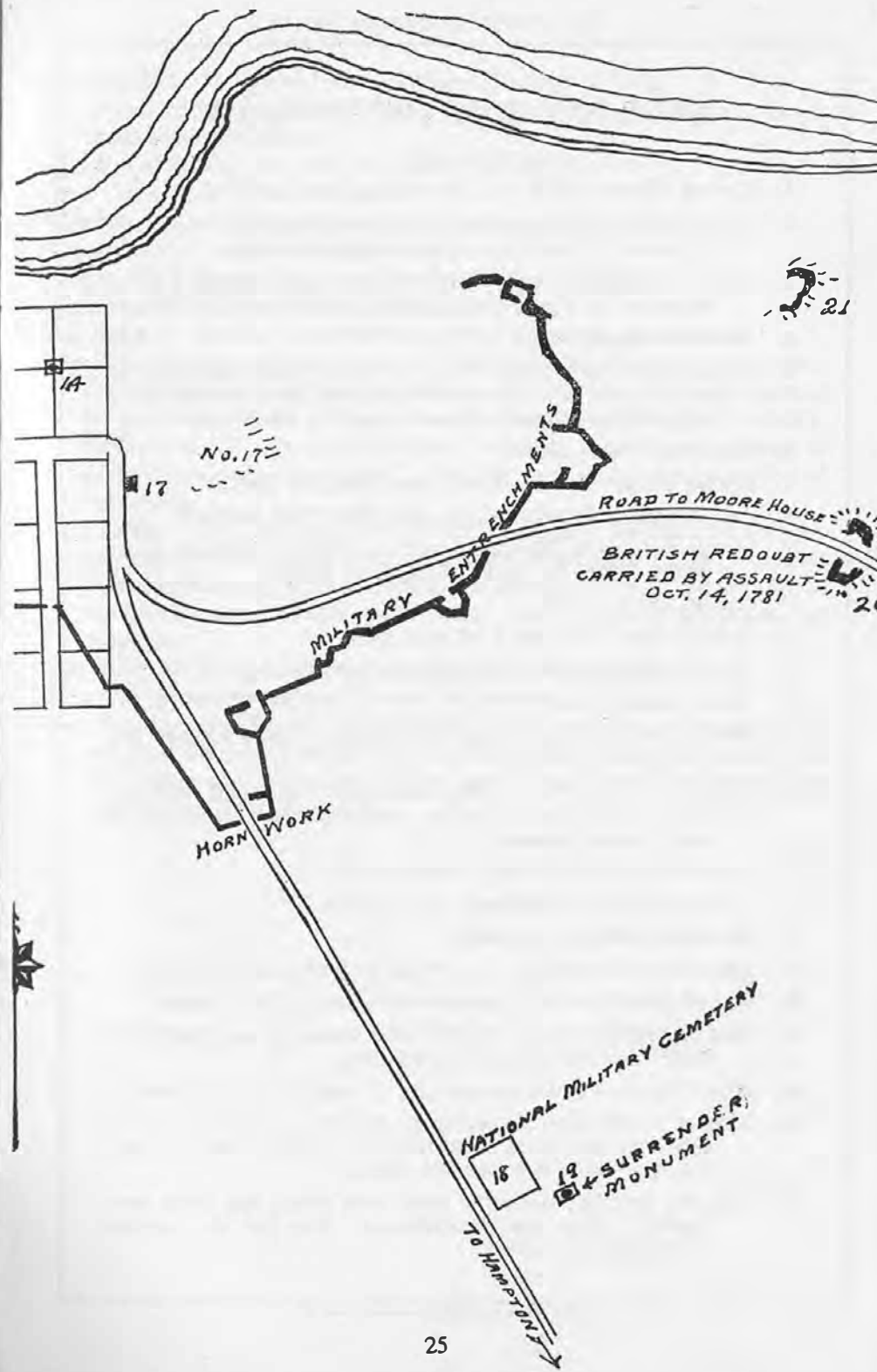
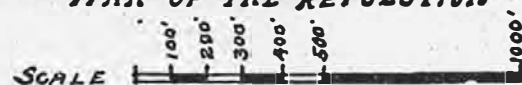
Main Historic Events of Town

1. By an Act of the General Assembly 50 acres of land were purchased for 10,000 pounds of tobacco for a Port Town on York River. Town laid off by Lawrence Smith into 83 half-acre lots in 1691.
2. Siege of Yorktown, 1781.
3. Sustained Damages in the War of 1812.
4. Town Besieged by McClellan in 1862.
5. During the World War York River was used as principal base for the Atlantic Fleet.

YORKTOWN BRANCH
 Association for the Preservation of Virginia Antiquities
 YORKTOWN, VIRGINIA



MAP OF YORKTOWN, VA.
SHOWING
BRITISH MILITARY ENTRENCHMENTS
WAR OF THE REVOLUTION



Index to Map of Yorktown, Va.

1. County Clerk's Office—Old Records—First Book, 1633.
2. Court House—Same site as Colonial Court House, which was built in 1697 and destroyed during Civil War.
3. Site of old Swan Tavern—1722. First house of public entertainment in Virginia and destroyed during Civil War.
4. Yorktown Hotel—1725.
5. Grace Episcopal Church—1700. Original Communion Service still in use. Bell presented by Queen Ann and bears the date 1725. General Nelson's tomb in church yard.
6. Customs House—1715.
7. Dudley Digges House—Here during Siege of 1781.
8. Revolutionary Battery No. 3, also Civil War Battery.
9. Home of General Nelson. Built in 1740 and used by Cornwallis during last part of Siege of 1781.
10. Oldest House—1699.
11. Brick House—Between 1706 and 1734.
12. House built prior to the Revolutionary War.
13. West House—1721 to 1730.
14. Monument commemorating surrender. Cornerstone laid October 19, 1881.
15. The Cave—Said to have been a smuggler's cave and used during Revolutionary War by Cornwallis as a bomb proof, ammunition magazine.
17. Site of Secretary Nelson's Home—1725.
- 17-a. Remnant of Revolutionary earthworks.
18. National Military Cemetery.
19. Surrender Monument. Very near spot of sword surrender.
20. Site of British redoubt stormed and taken by the French.
21. Site of British redoubt stormed and taken by the Americans under Colonel Alexander Hamilton.
22. Moore House—Where papers of capitulation were prepared.
23. Line of fortification immediately enclosing town were Revolutionary and were re-inforced by the Confederates during the "War Between the States."
24. The old, gnarled, mulberry trees seen about the town were planted before the Revolutionary War for the purpose of feeding silk-worms.

SOURCES AND REFERENCES

Minutes 1921-1986, Swem Library, College of William and Mary
 Notes and correspondence of Mrs. Conway H. Shield, Archives, Colonial Williamsburg Foundation
 Members of the Congress, Military Officers on duty in the area
 York County Court House Records
 Members of patriotic organizations who have shared in preserving records
 Descendents of early settlers of Yorktown
 Charles Hatch, Former Historian, Colonial National Historic Park
 Archives of the Colonial National Historic Park
 Mr. James M. Haskett, Senior Historian, Colonial National Historic Park
 Mrs. Rodney Cook, who has served as Historian for the Branch for many years, wrote the Constitution which was adopted in 1971. Mrs. Cook also arranged for the records of the Yorktown Branch to be placed in the Swem Library, College of William and Mary for "permanent deposit, as a means of preservation and conservation." She has been an invaluable source of information.
 Mrs. Leslie O'Hara, the last surviving Charter Member of the Branch during the preparation of the history (until her death on September 1, 1987) provided photographs, a copy of the Map and Guide published in 1922, and extra bits of information about events and activities not included in the minutes of meetings.
 Mrs. James H. Thompson for the loan of pictures and clippings.
 Mrs. C. E. Gammage, who was elected Trustee-at-Large VAPVA in 1981.
 Mrs. Paul Crockett, Sr., in a report to the VAPVA summed up the philosophy and goals which have guided Branch activities. "We had three areas of work: Recognition and Preservation of the past, Awareness of the Present, and Contributions to the Future."